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THE
CRY OF LITTLE FAITH
HEARD AND ANSWERED,

AND

Her INNOCENT CAUSE undertaken and pleaded,

IN A

LETTER to a FRIEND.

BY

WILLIAM HUNTINGTON, S.S.

MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL

AT PROVIDENCE CHAPEL, LITTLE TITCHFIELD-STREET;

AT MONKWELL-STREET CHAPEL, IN THE CITY;

AND AT RICHMOND, IN SURREY.

And beginning to sink he *cried*, Lord save me; and Jesus stretched forth his hand and caught him, saying, O thou of *little faith*! wherefore didst thou doubt? Matt. xiv. 30, 31.

Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones, Matt. xviii. 10.

L O N D O N :

Sold by G. Terry, Paternoster-row; J. Chalmers, No 210, Whitecross-street, near Moorfields; J. Davidson, No 7, Postern-row, Tower-hill; Mr. Baker, No 226, Oxford-street; Mrs. Howes, No 15, Charles-street, Wells-street; at Monkwell-street Chapel every Tuesday evening; at Providence Chapel, Titchfield-street; by Mr. Mantle, Lewes, Sussex; Mr. Fenley, Broad Mead, Bristol; and by Mr. Chamberlain, Portsmouth.

MDCCLXXXVIII.

[Price Sixpence.]



A
L E T T E R

IN DEFENCE OF
L I T T L E F A I T H.

DEAR SIR,

I Received your kind letter, and am glad and somewhat surpris'd at the advances that you have made in so short a time; we are to *grow in grace* and in the *knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*, which is what you do a-pace it seems. For my part, I was long *stumbling* upon the *dark mountains* before I got to your stature in faith. God tried mine as fast as it grew, but yours has grown up like the *palm tree*, and you will know the strength of it when the Saviour comes to *take hold of the boughs thereof*, Cant. vii. 8. I should like to hear some account of your trials as well as of your faith; for though faith be called

gold tried, Rev. iii. 18. yet the trial of faith exceeds it, for that is *more precious than gold*, 1 Pet. i. 7.

The *full assurance* of gospel faith is a most comforting, soul establishing, and God glorifying grace; yet it must be acknowledged, that faith is the gift of God, and all the household of faith are not at the height of this stature. I have known something of this grace for these fifteen years, and it is well known that it has been sorely tried many ways; and for my part, I believe it is the faith of God's elect that I am favoured with, for it hath prevailed with God times without number, and agreeable to Scripture, I find that *in quietness and in confidence is my strength*, Isai. xxx. 15. But I cannot find that it is in my power to exercise this grace when I would, though I could wish it were always in exercise. Faith is a *fruit* of the Spirit; hence the Spirit is called, the Spirit of faith; and if faith be a fruit of the Spirit, then the Spirit must be the life, power, and root of faith; and this *wind bloweth* when and where it *listeth*. I cannot command the North wind to awake when I please; nor is the South wind in my power, that it should blow on my garden at my pleasure and *cause the spices to flow out* at my command, Cant. iv. 16. This power rests entirely with God, who hath *dealt to every [believing] man the measure of faith*, Rom. xii. 3. Who alone has the *residue of the Spirit*, Mal. ii. 15. and does give to his people, as
need

need requires, *a supply of the same*, Phil. i. 19. which influences faith and every other grace, as it pleaseth God, who is the sovereign disposer of *every good and every perfect gift*. I find by daily experience, that the life, power, fortitude, or even the exercise of faith, is not at my command. I can only speak as I am moved, nor can I either will or do any thing truly good, but as God works inclination and motion in me *of his own good pleasure*. I am therefore compelled to acknowledge, that from the *Lord is my fruit found*, Hof. xiv. 8. and that without a sensible union with Christ I can do nothing; though God, who knows my heart, knows that I would willingly spend and be spent in his service, and in the service of his people.

However I find this is not the experience of every professor; some are *perfect in the flesh*, while I am obliged to confess, that in my flesh dwells nothing good. And you, Sir, are arrived at the full assurance of faith, insomuch that you are purged from all doubts and fears; while I at certain times cannot trust God for a text to preach from, nor believe that he will own or bless my labours, when I have got one: and I declare to you, Sir, and to my shame, that I have known the time, even since I could call the Saviour my father and my God, that I could not so much as trust him for food and raiment; and to be plain, I have known some that have been filled with as much assurance

of faith as you are, who have been as much frightened in the pulpit for matter and as much puzzled for the necessities of life as I have been; which has given me reason to suspect there has been doubts at the bottom, though they might have been overlooked, for I read, that *all things are possible to him that believeth*: and if *all things* are, *matter* for the pulpit and the necessities of life must be included among the *all things*, for our heavenly Father *knoweth* that we have *need* of *these things*. But enough of this; I would not pull you down from your excellency, nor wish you to exclude them that do not excel in faith. Jacob declared that *Reuben was unstable as water, he shall not excel*, Gen. xlix 4. yet the Mediator does not exclude him; he says, *Let Reuben live and not die, and let not his men be few*, Deut. xxxiii. vi. though they were but unstable men at best, for he sometimes staid among the sheep folds, to hear the bleatings of the flocks, when he should have been at war, yet the Lord's host did not exclude him, but were cut at his instability; for the divisions of Reuben there were great searchings of heart, Judges v. 16. but notwithstanding his instability, of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand, Rev. vii. 5.

According to your letter, nothing is faith that is short of full assurance. Now, though I should have no objection to compare notes with you, with regard to the life, power, prevalency, trial, victory, and triumphs of faith, which I believe I enjoyed

enjoyed in a measure before you had any faith at all, yet I cannot be brought to believe that any man can be naturally born or brought forth into this world six feet high in stature, and I think it is as strange to expect the *new creature* just formed in the heart to appear in the full assurance of faith. The *incorruptible seed*, under the operation of the Spirit, produces *faith*, which is a part of the *new creature*, and is God's *workmanship*, and a creature of his own forming; for he hath *created us anew in Christ Jesus*, and declares us *a people that he has formed for himself*, Isai. xliii. 21. We know that all God's works are perfect; yet I am of opinion that this *new creature*, though perfect in its parts at the first formation, yet not in degrees. If you object, then I ask, where is room for growth in grace? The full assurance of faith, is the highest stature of the *new creature*. I know God can give this grace the first moment that the Spirit operates, if assurance be essential to salvation, and cut down a *child in faith an hundred years old*, Isai. lxxv. 20. yet the Almighty does not always do so. It is God that *deals to every [believer] the measure of faith*, Rom. xii. 3. and an equal measure is not to be found in every one that believeth in Jesus; and although you cannot allow this to be true, yet I take it for granted, that in the course of your ministry, notwithstanding all your endeavours to enforce the full assurance of faith, and that all short of this stature

are in unbelief, yet you find some of the royal family as Jesus Christ did, I mean without any faith in exercise or in appearance, and perhaps this might be the case with you, if your cross was proportionable to your faith; and perhaps would act with little better courage than the disciples did, who cried, saying, *Master, master, we perish*; he answered, *Where is your faith?* Luke viii. 24, 25. And I am inclined to think, that if your faith was tossed on the same storm it would manage the helm very little better than their's did unless the Lord appeared; for faith is but a single member of the new creature, and we know that the new creature, with all its parts, is but weak unless the father and creator of it appears to support it: These we find had so lost their faith, that the Saviour asked where it was.

And others he owned had faith, though it was but little; *If God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith,* Matt. vi. 30. The last account we had was, that their faith was out of sight; and yet Christ says, *Where is your faith?* there was faith, and it was their's, or else there had been no enquiry about it; the Lord would have spoken as Moses did, and called them *children in whom is no faith,* Deut. xxxii. 20. But in the last account that we considered, their faith did appear, though it did not appear great, *O ye of little faith;* but I shall

shall not hang upon this point, for you do not countenance the *day of small things*.

We read of the woman of Canaan, who was immoveable in her confidence, whose faith stood a threefold rebuff, to whom the Lord said, *O woman, great is thy faith, be it unto thee even as thou wilt*, Matt. xv. 28. yet even this woman's faith doth not rise to your stature—yours is the fullest assurance; and the Saviour found one in his days who was a match for you, and but one, and that was the Centurion, who, in behalf of his sick servant, solicited the mercy of Jesus to heal him,—who required no sign, nor the Saviour's personal presence to perform the cure; *only say in a word and my servant shall be healed*, Luke vii. 7. *When Jesus heard these things he marvelled at him, and turning about said unto the people that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel*, Luke vii. 9. This man, Sir, according to your doctrine, was the Saviour's only faithful follower; for you assert in this letter of yours, that nothing is faith short of the full assurance; then what is to become of them whose faith the Saviour enquired after, and those of *little faith*, to say nothing about that faith that made them whole, and that which could lay hold of the power of Christ but not of his willingness, saying, *Lord, if thou wilt thou canst make me whole*; yet even this faith prevailed: *I will, be thou clean*, faith the ever-loving and ever-blessed Saviour. But these weak ones
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are to go to the wall according to your doctrine; you can take no notice nor make any account of these; and it is a comfort to such poor babes in Christ that you are not the author and finisher of faith; for he declares of his whole household, *that he that is least among them all, the same shall be great*, Luke ix. 48. nor shall they ever be damned—for *it is not the will of your father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish*, Matt. xviii. 14.

Believe me, Sir, I am not contending for the world; for I trust I can say, as Paul did, I endure all things for the elect's sake; nor am I contending for unbelievers—I have ever asserted that he that believes not shall be damned; nor am I contending for unbelief—for I declare, that if you will undertake with your full assurance to preach all unbelief out of my heart, I will take you to be my chaplain upon these conditions, no cure no pay; and if you can cure me of all my unbelief, I can pay you a thousand per annum—for the earth is the Lord's—and it is but to ask without doubting, and all things are possible to us. You are sure of your salary if you can but cure me of unbelief; and I assure you I have the greatest reason to believe that I am not destitute of the grace of faith, therefore you will not have a barren soil to work upon.

It is plain to me that there were no less than four degrees of faith among the Lord's followers in the days of his flesh; and if I am not mis-

taken the scriptures, divide the *household of faith* into four degrees with respect to age, growth, or stature; we read of *new born babes*—of *little children*—of *young men*—and of *fathers*; but you it seems will have nothing to do with any but the fathers; however our Saviour gently leads those that are with young, carries the *lambs* in his bosom, calls his sheep by name and *leads them out*, and makes others follow him.

Isaiah speaks of some that *waited on the Lord*—of others that *fled on eagles wings*—of others that *ran and were not weary*—and of some that *walked and were not faint*. A gospel minister is called a *father* to beget, a *nurse* to cherish, a *shepherd* to feed and lead, and a *builder* to establish; and I am bold to aver, that if you was to declare, the next sermon you preach, that all who *doubted* would be *damned*, that those who had lost all their power to exercise faith would muster an hundred pleas against you; *little faith* would go to Christ and cry for help; and they that *staggered* at the promise through *unbelief*, would call to arms, and rank a whole troop of marks, tokens, and promises against you, and dispute every inch of ground with you; and carry the day too with respect to *power* if not in point of logic.

Little Faith is a very formidable one when he takes the weapon of all-prayer and cries to Christ; for my part I should never care to engage him; the child shall put his hand on the
cockatrice

cockatrice den, and play on the whole of the asp, which I should not chuse to do; Christ carries the lambs in his bosom, while such strong sheep as you are obliged to trudge after on foot. You know what the Lord says with respect to these—*take heed that ye offend not one of these little ones that believe in me.*

At the Saviours *birth* the wise men worshipped him, and the angels proclaimed him; at *twelve years old* the Saviour grew in wisdom, in stature, in favour both with God and man, and disputed with the doctors; at *thirty years of age* he overcame Satan in the wilderness; and at *thirty-three* he *endured the cross and despised the shame*; and I suppose you love the Saviour in every stage of his life, as well as in every covenant character; and if you love the everlasting Father from his childhood, what makes you so severe against his rickety children? it is a rare thing to find so numerous a family all strong and lively; their faith, though it be but *little*, will bring them to the salvation of their souls at last, if you will but let them go their own pace. Faith cannot be hurried—*he that believes shall not make haste*; you may drive them to presume—you cannot drive them to believe; ministers have no dominion over the saints faith, but are fellow-helpers of their joy; faith will be attended on, not drove; Paul offered himself up on the service of faith, not as a demolisher of it; faith is God's work, and they are branded for rebels who said, *Let him*

him hasten his work that we may see it, Isa. v. 19. This is the *work of God, that we believe on him whom he hath sent*; and surely God never sent his servants to destroy the work of his own hands.—For my part I would ever wish to nurse faith, whether it be in the *conception*—faith comes by hearing; in the *formation*—that *Christ may dwell* in your hearts by faith; or whether it appear in *labour*, in those who stagger at the promise; or whether it be growing up, able to shift for itself—who *live by the faith of the Son of God*; or whether it be able to defy *angels, principalities, and powers*, as Paul's faith was.

It seems that my friend has nothing to offer in behalf of *Zion in labour*, nor in behalf of her *fondlings*, that are to be borne on her sides, or dandled on her knees; he has nothing to encourage children, who cry *Hold thou me up and I shall be safe; guide me, lead me, or draw me; stay me with flaggons, comfort me with apples, for I am sick of love*;—he cannot condescend to men of low degree—he minds only *high things*. I believe that I have got at this time three hundred in the church that I minister to, who are short of your stature in faith according to your letter; and instead of disputing them out of their faith, or driving them out of the church on account of their weakness, I wish God would send me three hundred more such; for through grace I can see the difference between *embrio* and *old age*; for I believe that the strongest column in faith was first
formed

formed by the Spirit, and the incorruptible seed of God's word, which at first laid hold on a dry, dead, withered, and barren womb. But my dear brother is like *Elkanah*; if he cannot make Hannah bear, he will not stay till she has tried her faith, but will take Peninah; but in the end the slighted spouse, who was rejected for want of the fruit of the full assurance, will tell him that *by strength shall no man prevail*.

I take it for granted that you will call me a minister of unbelief, and an encourager of doubts and fears; to which I reply, neither unbelief nor doubting have ever been any friends to me, therefore I am not pleading their cause; my plea is on the behalf of faith, whether it appears in the *ewe great with young*, Isa. xl. 11. —in the *lamb* that rides in the bosom—in the *sheep* that lay down in *green pastures*, Psa. xxiii. 2. —or in the old *ram*, *whose horns are iron and whose hoofs are brass*, Micah iv. 13. Who would condemn Isaac because he was lodged in a womb ninety years of age, because the mother laughed at the promise? he was a child of promise in the womb, and before conceived there, and he was no more than an heir of promise when he died. We sometimes see old sinners in soul travel; and though a troop of doubts and fears are mustered up by the devil and the old man to hinder the birth, yet *little faith* will break forth as soon as her little sister *charity* comes to her help—and the elder shall serve the younger; faith worketh
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by love, and love will ever attend and assist faith.

Having then gifts, differing according to the grace that is given us, whether prophesying let us prophecy according to the proportion of faith, Rom. xii. 6.— The apostles, and even Jesus Christ himself, prophesied to four degrees of faith; but you can allow of no faith below the superlative degree; between their prophecies and yours there is a very great disproportion; and I dare say there is as great a disproportion between your faith and the faith of some of your hearers. There is a great disproportion between babes and men, and between milk and strong meat—between *little faith* and *very great faith*; and unless you can stoop to feed the lambs, you cannot in this sense *prophecy according to the measure of faith*.

I would advise you Sir to keep three curates; one to attend spiritual groanings, or such as are in *pain to bring forth*; another to nurse and cherish children, and feed them with the *sincere milk of the word*; another to *strengthen the weak hands and confirm the feeble knees*, and then you may attend them that are of *full age*, Heb. v. 14. and speak the *wisdom of God in a mystery to those that are perfect*.

If this my council should be approved, and you should think proper to adopt the method, then you need not study one part in ten of the Bible; you have nothing to do with the groanings, strugglings, conflicts, nor the petitions of
faith,

faith, but only to cull out the triumphs of it.— You tell me that “ nothing but assurance is faith, and that faith and doubts cannot be in a person at one and the same time.” I can prove, Sir, to you that I have got faith, and you own it, and I wish you would come and dispute me out of all my unbelief and doubts, for I have many in me, though I do not (blessed be God) doubt of the eternal salvation of my soul; yet I doubt many things, therefore you must dispute me out of these, or rank me with the unbelievers.

Him that is weak in faith receive you, but not to doubtful disputations, Rom. xiv. 1. If there are some who are weak in faith, faith cannot be strong nor great in them. Some stagger at the promise, and others lay hold of Christ with a trembling hand—believe in his *ability*, as the poor leper did, *Lord if thou wilt thou canst make me clean*, but stagger at his *willingness*; their hearts fail and misgive them, they are *children tossed to and fro*—they are *children in understanding*; they *speak as children, think as children, and understand as children*; but these are to be *received*, but not to *doubtful disputations*; not to hear vain disputes that leave every thing doubtful but settle nothing; nor are they to be *disputed out of their faith* because they are weak, and harassed with many doubts, such as, whether they are right or wrong—whether this is lawful or that—whether they shall hold out or fall short—whether their
faith

faith be genuine or feigned—whether their sensations are of God, or whether it is not all a delusion; these things do at times attend the weak believer more or less, yet *he is to be received, for God has received him*, Rom. xiv. 3.

I think it may be proved that faith and doubts have been found in a child of God at one and the same time. Peter discovered it when he walked on the sea; *And when Peter was come down out of the ship he walked on the water to go to Jesus; but when he saw the wind boisterous he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried, saying, Lord save me; and immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of LITTLE FAITH, wherefore didst thou doubt?* Matt. xiv. 30, 31. Jesus Christ, who is a better judge of the heart than we are, allowed Peter to have faith, though at that time he was one of *little faith* and did *doubt*; yet *little faith* can cry for help, though she cannot weather the storm; if she cannot keep herself from sinking, she will pray to him that is able to hold her up—and prevail to, for *Jesus stretched forth his hand immediately and caught him* as soon as the voice of *little faith* was heard.

There is as great a disproportion between you and *little faith* as there is between an infant in its gocart and a giant in armour; and for you, Sir, to bend your whole might against the little ones of the family, is acting like Amaleck, who pursued the children of Israel, and not being

able to overtake the *van*, cut off all the *rear*; *he smote all that were feeble, faint, and weary, and he feared not God*, Deut. xxv. 18. Christ will not break the bruised reed, nor will he allow us to bruise the heel of his mystical body without resenting it. Christ pays peculiar attention to the little ones: *Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you he shall in no wise lose his reward*, Matt. x. 42. But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a mill-stone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea, Matt. xviii. 6. Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones, verse 10, for it is not the will of our Father which is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish, verse 14. And pray why were these young disciples called *little ones*? because they were young in grace, children in understanding, and some of them were men of *little faith*. Sometimes they thought they should not be either fed or clothed, unless they were burthened with cares for the morrow—"If God
 " so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day
 " is and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall
 " he not much more clothe you, O ye of little
 " faith? Therefore I say unto you, take no
 " thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or
 " what ye shall drink; nor for your body what
 " ye shall put on, neither be ye of a doubtful
 " mind," Luke xii. 29. Matt. vi. 25. 30.

Certain it is that the scriptures express various degrees of faith, as well as of assurance; and it is as plain to me that faith and doubts have been in a believer at one and the same time; *Then the disciples went into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him they worshipped him; but some doubted,* Matt. xxviii. 16, 17. These eleven were all disciples, and they were all believers in Jesus, and they worshipped him—but some doubted.

Peter was not void of doubt about the vision that appeared to him—the voice that came to him, saying, *Arise, Peter, kill and eat*; but Peter said, Not so Lord; and *while he doubted in himself what this vision should mean, the Spirit said unto him, Behold three men seek thee; arise therefore and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing; for I have sent them,* Acts x. 17. Manoah was not void of doubt when he said unto his wife, *We shall surely die, because we have seen God*; but the faith of his wife put his doubts to flight, saying, “If the Lord were pleased to kill us he
“ would not have received a burnt-offering and
“ a meat-offering at our hands, neither would
“ he have told us these things, nor have shewed
“ us such things as these,” Judges xiii. 22, 23. When the Saviour testified to the twelve that one of them should betray him, they, knowing the hypocrisy of the human heart, *looked one at another, doubting of whom he spake,* John xiii. 21, 22.

To be short, if a believer has no such sin as unbelief in him, he would not meet with so many reproofs and rebukes in the word of God as he does, nor would he suffer for it as some have done; especially *Zacharias*, who upon hearing that his prayer was answered, and that his wife should bear a son, and that he should be a prophet and the Lord's forerunner, required a sign, who was *struck dumb nine months for his unbelief*, and doubting the truth of *the angel's message*, which was fulfilled in its season, Luke i. 20. If our favourite apostle had found no unbelief nor doubts among the saints in his days, he would not have cautioned them against it—I will that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting, 1 Tim. ii. 8.

Where there is unbelief there is doubting; they always go together; and who can say I have made my heart clean with respect to unbelief—I am pure from the sin of doubting; and if they are not free from unbelief, they are not free from doubts; for although they may have the fullest assurance of their eternal salvation, yet they doubt about many things. The father of the faithful was hardly free from doubts when he denied his wife in Egypt, and said, They will kill me for thy sake; say, I pray thee, thou art my sister, that it may be well with me for thy sake, and my soul shall live because of thee, Gen. xii. 12, 13.

Though the gospel came to the Thessalonians with power, in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance,

ance, yet it does not go to every chosen vessel with that degree of power, nor with so much assurance. Paul speaks of some whose faith grew exceedingly, and of others who for the time ought to have been teachers, needed teaching again. We are to feed the lambs as well as the sheep, John xxi. 15, 16. to strengthen weak hands, to confirm feeble knees, and to say to fearful hearts, Be strong, fear not, the Lord your God will come and save you, Isa. xxxv. 3, 4. though such souls can scarcely say the Lord our God. I think if I was with you a little while I should find something like doubting about you, notwithstanding all this assurance that thou art now possessed of. You own that you meet with a deal of opposition, both from professors and prophane; these, like Sanballet and Tobia, are mountains in the way of Zerubbabel, Zech. iv. 7. how is it then that thou dost not remove them? Verily I say unto you, if ye have faith and DOUBT not, ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done, Matt. xxi. 21.

Your usefulness is not singularly great, nor are your people in the sweetest union, far from it; yet I doubt not but you pray for these things.—I would advise you to put forth a little more faith with your prayers; If a man do not DOUBT in his heart, but shall believe that those things that he saith shall come to pass, he shall have whatsoever he saith, Mark xi. 23. You have got a carnal * * *, whose besetting sin is covetousness; I wish you

would make a trial of your faith upon her; we know that a sinner is a *corrupt tree*, and the *love of money* is the *root* of all evil; if thy faith is void of all *doubts*, you might say to that *corrupt tree*, *Be thou plucked up by the roots, and be thou planted in the sea of glass mingled with fire*, Rev. xv. 2. which is the gospel dispensation, and it would be done—all things are possible to him that believes. A less degree of faith than that which you talk of would do this—*If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you*, Luke xvii. 6. I have been praying for faith these fifteen or sixteen years, and still I find when God is pleased to try me, that it is as much as ever faith can do to stand the fire, or manage the cross.

If I was to attend your ministry, instead of strengthening my faith you would beget a thousand doubts in my mind; for every time I heard you enforce a faith that could purify the heart from that cursed sin of unbelief, and from all doubts that attend it, I should act the part of the adulterous generation, I should *require a sign*;—I should say, *What sign shewest thou?* And if upon observation I found thy labours and usefulness not to exceed that of others,—if thy heart appeared no more pure than my own,—if thy victory over the world was no greater than mine,—if thy faith worked by no more love than my
own

own does,—if thy prevalency with God did not appear to excell,—if no conspicuous answers to prayer appeared,—if I perceived no superior degree of knowledge,—no experience that excells others,—no trophies of faith's victories, like those of Paul,—no visions, nor miraculous revelations,—no rapturous triumphs, *nor any pressures beyond measure to make you despair even of life*, I should judge of you as some did of Samson when they cut off his hair—I should think you were *no more than another man*; and for my part I should give you the old challenge, *Shew me thy faith without thy works*—which is what no man ever could—and *I will shew thee my faith by my works*, James ii. 18. which every real believer can do.

I read that faith is coupled with repentance; the apostles *preached repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ*. Faith is a *coming to God by repentance*; it views God a *rewarder of them that diligently seek him*; it is an apprehending of Jesus Christ with all his saving benefits; it applies the atonement; it purifies the heart by an application of the Saviour's blood; it puts on an *imputed righteousness*; it gives Christ a residence in the heart—he is said to *dwell in the heart by faith*; it *worketh by love* to Christ, and to all that love him in sincerity and truth; it is a penetrating eye, it *sees him who is invisible*, Heb. xi. 27. it is a mighty hand, *I held him fast*, says the spouse, *I would not let him go, until I had*

brought him into my mother's house, and into the chambers of her that conceived me, Song iii. 4. The spouse brought Christ into her heart, and into the church too; faith is a diligent foot—we walk by faith and not by sight.

Now if thou canst give me no account of repentance toward God, as well as faith,—no account of receiving the atonement, and of the purifying efficacy of Christ's blood when applied by faith,—no account of putting on an imputed righteousness, and of that peace which attends it,—no account of Christ's taking possession of thy heart,—no account of the beauties of him who is invisible,—no account of the love that faith works by,—no account of prevailing with God in prayer,—no account of laying hold of Christ, nor of bringing him into the chamber of her that conceived thee, I should not fear thee as a prophet of the Lord, nor should I pay any respect to thy faith, because thou hast none of the above works to shew. If thou art destitute of these things, thou mayest well boast of faith, for thou hast got nothing else; *But will thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead, James ii. 20.*

It may be observed, that the scriptures are not so profuse about what faith is, as they are about what faith *does*. By faith Noah was *moved with fear* and built an ark; by it Moses forsook Egypt; by it he endured affliction; and the love that his faith worked by influenced his heart to
have

have respect to the recompence of reward. But you are silent about these things—you have only to do with the full stature of faith; you are not for the *feats* of faith, only for the *size*; *my desire is that Job may be tried unto the end*, Job xxxiv. 36. If I could see thee tried in a measure as Job was, and hear thee say when in the furnace, as he did, *Though he slay me yet will I trust in him*, I should then think thy faith had got a divine hold indeed; but at present we differ; you seem to be filled with assurance, while I doubt whether thy faith be genuine or not. I know you will rank me with the unbelievers, and I *desire to be present with you*, to dispute the point, *and to change my voice, for I stand in DOUBT of you*, Gal. iv. 20. that is, whether your faith be of the right kind, and whether it has been soundly tried or not. For my part I would not exchange my weak faith for yours; I know what it has done, though I know not what it has yet to do; but this I know, that faith is not the strength of my heart, though I would wish to be strong in faith; God is the *strength of his people's hearts*, and as their *day is* so shall their *strength be*; God gives them faith to work in, and faith to fight by, though he seldom gives them a stock in hand to boast of.

I once knew a woman, who was a poor, weak, illiterate person, an inferior servant in a family, who pretended that she had been converted to the faith at a place called *Stains*, in *Middlesex*; who
sometime

sometime after her conversion came to *London*, and shortly threw herself out of servitude, and pretended to a great degree of faith and knowledge; and with this trading stock she soon got acquainted with several professing people; and by frequenting places of public worship, and prayer meetings, she began to be well known and highly esteemed at our end of the town; and in process of time she was able, with her faith and knowledge, to *mump* a livelihood. She had wisdom enough not to pay her visits to those of experience or discernment, but chiefly to such as were running here and there, crying out, *Who will shew us any good?* Among these she constantly prophesied; and where she carried her message there she got her provision, and so lived like a hawking pedlar, and went from house to house.

Among the various families that she plundered, Mr. BAKER, *grocer*, of *Oxford-street*, was one, who in process of time came to attend my ministry; and after I got acquainted with them, I frequently called at their house, and in the course of conversation a certain person called *Nanny* was every now and then brought up. I desired to know something of the pedigree, the religion, the life, and the behaviour of this *Nanny*; and by their account I found that she did not approve of working for a livelihood, nor did she get her bread under the mask of *candour*; for she shewed her authority, used sharpness, found

found fault of their family affairs, housekeeping, and whatever fell under her observation; if she saw the gentleman receiving fresh goods into his shop, she replied, "Ah you are *filling your barns*; What if your *soul was to be required this night*? And when they gave her a guinea, she replied, "I don't thank you for it"; the most they ever could get of her at the reception of a guinea, was to turn up her eyes to God, and inform them she was not beholden to them. She did not cringe as Paul did, calling an alms a *sweet smelling savour, acceptable unto God*.

Nanny could see who knew the truth and who did not; and by the use she made of scraps of scripture, and the authority she exercised, she kept them in perpetual awe, and became a formidable object of their fear for two or three years together; which God has made of great use to them since, as it has given them an idea of a mumping hypocrite. I gave them to understand that the scriptures warranted no such behaviour as this for *women professing godliness*; they intimated that she was "certainly a good woman, though she was rather haughty and strange in her way." I asked whose ministry Nanny attended; and I found those were the most in favour with her who dealt in law terrors. All these things gave me a strong suspicion that Nanny was no prophetess.

However it once fell out, that I happened to call on them when she was present; and the good
man

man and his wife were sitting by, or at her feet, while she was exercising her authority, and enforcing her rebukes. I took a chair and set down by her, though she seemed rather in a bad temper. I enquired a little into her conversion, and the manner of it;—how she came at first by her profession—what troubles she had been in, and how delivered—whether she had felt the burden of her sins, and how it was removed—what she knew of the operations of grace, and of the liberty of the spirit; and Nanny gave me just as confused an account as one of the Lapland witches would have done. The good man and his wife set and bit their lips, and seemed displeased with my scrutinizing of her; they did not like to see their governess and tutoress arraigned at the bar; however I knew it was my duty to *judge those that are within, and those that are without God judgeth*, 1 Cor. v. 12, 13.

Some time after this Nanny called on them again, and inveighed against them for *idolatry*—declaring that they idolised Mr. Huntington.—I know not why it is, but I never could find much favour in the eyes of this sort of folks, do what I would. They asked her, “How it was that she never had been afraid of their idolising her?” She replied, “I come to you with the word of the Lord;” they answered, “So does Mr. Huntington;” she soon perceived that they entangled her in her speech, carried too many guns for her, and that her mask began to fall off,

off, and therefore she left them, as unreclaimable.

The next tidings we heard of her was, that she had borrowed three pounds of a professing man; and when the man demanded payment, she rebuked him for expecting it from *a child of God*. The next news was, that a person of note had sent for her from report; when she came, the gentlewoman had company, and desired her to stay below till they were gone; and when she was admitted, she exclaimed against being kept in waiting as *a child of God*, and told them they ought not to respect *fine clothing and the gold ring*, James ii. 2. the person gave her an entertainment and dismissed her. The next news was, that a poor woman came to Mr. BAKER who got her bread by charing; she complained she could not live in the house with Nanny—she could do nothing to please her (at that time she was supported by an upper servant in a family), yet she was afraid to turn her out, for fear of offending God. However, soon after God smote her with convulsions and horror of mind; and being struck dumb also, she was not permitted to tell what she felt or what she feared. Some people offered to pray for her; but she refused it, as standing in no need of it, as she had often affirmed that none could teach her more than she knew; though, with respect to power, or even of the letter, she knew nothing—and so she died.

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I do not say that your faith is of this kind ; but this I will say, that your enforcing perpetually the full assurance of faith, will drive many hardened sinners and hypocrites to presume, and their presumption will be taken for faith. You may furnish their heads, though you cannot manure their hearts; and you may drive them to presume, but you cannot drive them to believe. It is such presumptuous, idle, canting, whining persons as these that bring a slur on the cause of God, and occasion that *religion that is pure and undefiled* to be *evilily spoken of*. The grace of God never makes a man a bad husband, a bad father, or a bad servant; it not only teaches but powerfully influences a man to do the husband's and the father's part,—a woman to know her place, act the part of a wife and of a mother,—the child to be obedient,—and the father to govern under God; the servant to be industrious, diligent, and submissive,—and the master and mistress to *respect servants that are faithful*.

It is true, God gives no husband, wife, child, master, or mistress, who are destitute of grace, any power over a good conscience towards God, either to force it, or lead it from him; yet he enforces behaviour becoming godliness on *God-fearing people*. Nothing will ever mend the hearts of sinners, or promote holiness either in heart or life, but enforcing the grace of God in Christ Jesus, and the necessity of a *spiritual birth*, which alone can produce it. This we ought to do, and then

then leave God to give the *increase*. The excellency and the power is of him, not of us. 'Tis our duty to *sow the seed in the morning, and in the evening not to withhold our hand; but we cannot tell which shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good*, Eccl. xi. 6.

God *has concluded all men in unbelief*; and if the Spirit convinces a man of the sin of unbelief, that same Spirit will work faith in his own good time. The mind of an awakened sinner generally flies first to the law; to the holiness, justice, and immutability of the Lawgiver—and he will apply every sentence or threatening to himself. Such *believe in Moses*; and faith will lead them in time to *believe in Jesus*. They that *believe Moses' writings*, will in time *believe the Saviour's words*, John v. 46, 47. *Faith comes by hearing*, and hearing by the word of God, Rom. x. 17. By the word preached God begets sinners; *of his own will begat he us with the word of truth*, James i. 18. The *incorruptible seed* of grace by the word of God is conceived, 1 Peter i. 23. and by the promises preached and applied are we made partakers of the *divine nature*, 2 Peter i. 4. But it is common with God to chasten such souls, that they may *be partakers of his holiness*, Heb. 12. 12. and under these divine operations, there is a deal of soul-travel, and unbelief will shew itself (unless you allow of perfection in the flesh); and it is the workings of unbelief against grace that
causes

causes so much hard labour in the awakened mind, until faith gathers strength, and perfect love appears, and casteth out fear ; then life and immortality are brought to light—but the soul is but a new-born babe then. 'Tis true you will hear such often say in their prosperity, *I shall never be moved. Thou Lord of thy favour hast made my mountain stand strong ;* yet if God hides his face, they are soon troubled, Ps. xxx. 6, 7. and they will ask, *Will the Lord cast off for ever ? and will he be favourable no more ? Hath God forgotten to be gracious ? Hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies ? Is his mercy clean gone for ever ? Doth his promise fail for evermore ?* Yet these very persons were not destitute of faith—*And I said this in my infirmity : but I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High,* Ps. lxxvii. 7, 8, 9, 10.

But it seems you have got rid of all these infirmities ; and if you have, you may well triumph ; for you have got rid of the main sinew of the old man, which no child of God ever could boast of till you appeared. I cannot find one in the Bible that ever declared he was free from the sin of unbelief, though many of them were more mighty in faith than you are. For my part, I view unbelief to be the life and strength of all sin ; and he that is free from this sin is a perfect man—he is able to govern the whole body. Patience must of course have had her perfect work in him, and he is entire, wanting nothing.

However, I am of opinion, that when you have done your best, you will find *new-born babes, little children, and young men*, as well as *fathers*, in the church of God; and I am ready to conclude, that if God should try thee in the furnace of affliction, as I hope he will, for your *soul's good*, and the *good of others*, that thou wilt find thyself as helpless as some of those little ones who appear so weak in faith. God says, *Let the weak say I am strong*; and how can it be otherwise, when God is their strength? Joel iii. 10. Wherever the least feature of the Saviour's image appears, it is to be regarded. *He that loves him that begat, loves him that is begotten of him.* Those that are *strong* are to *bear the infirmities of the weak*, and to sympathize with them, considering themselves also in the flesh. And I believe the strongest saint upon earth would find himself but a *bruised reed*, if God was to leave him but one moment to feel the plague of his own heart. He would be like Hezekiah, "I
" said, in the cutting off of my days, I shall go
" to the gates of the grave: I am deprived of
" the residue of my years. I said, I shall not
" see the Lord, even the Lord in the land of
" the living: I shall behold man no more with
" the inhabitants of the world. Mine age is de-
" parted, and is removed from me as a shep-
" herd's tent. I have cut off like a weaver my
" life: he will cut me off with pining sickness:
" from day even to night wilt thou make an
C " end

“ end of me. I reckoned till morning, that as
 “ a lion, so will he break all my bones: from
 “ day even till night wilt thou make an end of
 “ me. Like a crane or a swallow so did I chat-
 “ ter: I did mourn as a dove: mine eyes fail
 “ with looking upward. O Lord, I am oppress-
 “ ed, undertake for me,” Isa. xxxviii. 10. and
 downward. This man was not destitute of faith
 in God; God had wonderfully blessed him, as
 appears by the 30th, 31st, and 32d chapters of
 the 2d book of Chronicles. *Howbeit, in the business*
of the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon, who sent
unto him to inquire of the wonder that was done in the
land, God left him to try him, that he might know all
that was in his heart, 2 Chron. xxxii. 31. And if
 the Lord was to serve thee so, thou wouldest find
 something in thy heart besides the *full assurance of*
faith, as well as he who required a sign to dash
 his unbelief out of countenance, and put his
 doubts to flight; and God sent him one. *Then*
came the word of the Lord to Isaiah, saying, Go,
and say unto Hezekiah, Thus saith the Lord the God
of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have
seen thy tears: behold, I will add unto thy days fif-
teen years. And I will deliver thee and this city out
of the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will defend
this city. And this shall be a sign unto thee from
the Lord, that the Lord will do this that he hath
spoken: behold, I will bring again the shadow of
the degrees which is gone down in the sun-dial of
Abaz ten degrees backward. So the sun returned ten
 degrees,

degrees, by which degrees it was gone down, Isa. xxxviii. 6, 7, 8. *God does nothing in vain.* If the king had been plagued with no unbelief; if he had no doubts to scatter, no wavering in his mind, there had been no call for a *sign*. He might have said, as the centurion did concerning his sick servant, *Speak in a word, and my servant shall be healed.* Speak in a word, and I shall be restored. But all the family of God have not got the full assurance of faith—and those that have the strongest assurance cannot exercise it when they please. David had this grace in the highest exercise, when he said to the Philistine, “Thou comest to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a shield; but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand. And I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee. And I will give the carcases of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth: that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. And all this assembly shall know, that the Lord saveth not with sword and spear; for the battle is the Lord’s, and he will give you into our hands,” 1 Sam. xvii. 45, 46. Here is assurance under arms at the front of the battle; but his assurance did not appear to be in such wonderful exercise at the time of Absalom’s conspiracy, which many of his

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people

people took notice of. *And all the people were at strife throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, the king saved us out of the hand of our enemies, and he delivered us out of the hand of the Philistines, and now he is fled out of the land for Absalom, 2 Sam. xix. 9.*

These observations are sufficient to prove, that all the *household of faith* are not blessed with *full assurance*; and 'tis as evident, that the life, power, spirit, and exercise of faith is not at the command, nor at the disposal of man. And 'tis as plain, that the *old man* and the *new one*, *grace* and *corruption*, *faith* with her fruits, *unbelief* with her doubts, do dwell in a child of God, at one and the same time. There is in the best of men a *law in the members warring against the law of the mind*. And 'tis clear that *assurance* belongs to the *law of faith* and love in the mind, and 'tis as plain that *unbelief* is part of the *law* in the *members*; and so you will find it when you come to be tried, unless you are one of them who are *perfect in the flesh*. If so, you have no battle to fight, nor any thing to pray for; and 'tis well for you that your faith is grown so exceedingly. But there are some who are so weak in this grace, that they are obliged to pray as the Apostles did, *Lord, increase our faith*, Luke xvii. 5. and others again that said, *Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief*, Mark ix. 24. and these petitions prevailed with the Saviour, as well as yours. Therefore preach the faith, encourage
weak

weak faith, and impart that which is *lacking in their faith*; and let them go on their own pace. He that *believes shall not make haste*, Isa. xxviii. 10. He that *hasteneth with his feet sinneth*, Prov. xix. 2. The Lord's family is like Jacob's *drove*, when he said to Esau, "My lord knoweth that the
 " children are tender, and the flocks and herds
 " with young are with me; and if men should
 " overdrive them one day, all the flocks will
 " die. Let my lord, I pray thee, pass over be-
 " fore his servant; and I will lead on softly, ac-
 " cording as the cattle that goeth before me,
 " and the children be able to endure; until I
 " come unto my lord unto Seir," Gen. xxxiii. xiii. 14.

I have often observed, that some of the most renowned saints in the bible, I mean those that were strong men in grace, and mighty in faith, have appeared *like little children*, when God has withdrawn the light of his blessed countenance from them and put them into the furnace of affliction; and we have some in our days who would willingly be thought to excell in this most excellent grace of faith, who I am persuaded would discover as many doubts upon the deep waters of affliction as Peter did when the boisterous sea hid the face of Jesus from his eyes.

Therefore, I must intreat thee in behalf of my brother *Little Faith*; he is a good man, though like Zaccheus, of *little stature*, nor drive him with

your strong assurance into the sycamore tree; if you do, when Jesus comes he will make him come down again. You may observe in this epistle that I sometimes call *Little Faith* by the masculine and sometimes by the feminine gender, because there are godly men as well as women, who often appear to have but *little faith*, or to be slow of heart to believe. However you will know *Little Faith* by his cries, and by the titles that God has given him; but wherever he be, if he calls for thine assistance and sympathy let him find grace in thy sight.

Thou wilt sometimes find him struggling between the *streight* till he is out of breath, and then he will lie down and plunge no more, as if he was hung in the birth. Hence he is threatened with more hard labour; *The sorrows of a travailing woman shall come upon him; he is an unwise son, for he should not stay long in the place of the breaking forth of children*, Hosea xiii. 13. yet he was a son and the seed of faith was in him: *Is Ephraim my dear son, is he a pleasant child, I remember him still, my bowels are moved for him, I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord*, Jer. xxxi. 20.

Sometimes thou wilt find him to be all faith, all praise, and all religion; *Mounting up as upon eagles wings*, Isai. xl. 31. till some contrary wind blows him too far toward the north, then he loses the rays of the sun and down he comes,
and

and you will see him move no more till God moves him. He will *mourn* but not *strive*; cast away his *confidence* but not resist; write bitter things against himself but nothing against Satan; he has a heart to fret, a heart to murmur, a heart to complain, and an heart to rebel; but no heart to strive, fight, or plead; and he is *slow of heart to believe*; hence he is called *a silly dove without a heart*, Hosea vii. 11.

He is sometimes to be found with a yoke about his neck; then it may be concluded that he has either been running away from his work as others have done, saying, *I will not make mention of him nor speak any more in his name*, Jer. xx. 9. or else, he has been breaking through his bounds and God has caught him upon the old *common*, feeding upon the *old fare*, for which he is yoked. He makes the yoke himself, and God ties it on and makes him wear it. *The yoke of my transgressions is bound by his hand; they are wreathed and come up upon my neck*, Lam. i. 14.

Sometimes pride carries him away; he is so lifted up in his comfortable frames that he concludes that no person has any faith but himself; he can admit of no doubts, fears, or misgivings; he has got a little of the good wine of the kingdom; *he drinks, and forgets his poverty and thinks he shall remember his misery no more*, Prov. xxxi. 6, 7. prosperity has made him forget the *wormwood and the gall*, Lam. iii. 19. therefore it is beneath him to come down from his excellency

to sympathize with them who are *putting their mouth in the dust if so be there might be hope*, Lam. iii. 29. This tincture of haughtiness procures him a little degradation; the humble soul that he thought little of is exalted to honour, while he to his great mortification is obliged for a while to *take the lowest room*, Luke xiv. 9.

Sometimes *Little Faith* abuses his liberty; his light joys carry him too high; filial fear is not strong enough to make him think soberly; joys and triumphs are all in all; prayer gets out of season with him, whereas we never need be more fervent in prayer than in times of prosperity. For these things he is often shut up in the *black hole*; then prayer becomes seasonable. *I am shut up, I cannot come forth, mine eye mourneth by reason of affliction; Lord, I have called daily upon thee, I have stretched out my hands unto thee*, Psalm lxxxviii. 9, 10.

Sometimes he is too heedless in his race; he runs here and there to try various winds of doctrine; judging himself capable of discerning good and evil, he will dispute doctrinal points with any old forcerer, like John's young disciples, who began to dispute with the Jews *about purifying*, John iii. 25. he can *play on the hole of the asp*, and put his *hand on the cockatrice den*—or even *take a dog by the ears*, Prov. xxvi. 17. he thinks his joys are sufficient to carry him through; however, in order to keep him in the company of wise men, the Lord sometimes permits the *harlot*, or *false church*, to cast such an one *down wounded*, Prov. vii. 26.

vii. 26. until he finds himself laid by the *beels*; to teach him to run more carefully when he has the use of his limbs; then he complains, *Thou puttest my feet in the stocks, and lookest narrowly unto all my paths; thou settest a print upon the beels of my feet*, Job xiii. 27.

Sometimes he discovers a deal of rebellion and stubbornness under the rod, and would sooner run away from God than humble himself under his mighty hand; he will flee from the rod rather than confess or supplicate; and be froward rather than submissive; *I smote him, I bid me, and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart*, Isa. lvii. 17. It is common with some children, when threatened or when whipt, to take to their heels; for which defiance this message is often sent after them, "I shall have you at night—I will give it you when you come to bed." We all know there is a *night coming, in which no man can work*, John ix. 4. If we wait, *the grave is our house*, yet we should not like to *make our bed in the darknes*, Job xvii. 13. As none would like to be put to bed in the dark, nor under the rod, let *Little Faith* kiss the rod, and know who hath appointed it, and fly to the hand that holds it, lest at bed-time he cry out, as others have done, *O spare me, that I may recover strength before I go hence and be no more*, Psalm xxxix. 13. The rod is useful; iniquity is bound in the *heart* of a child, and it is the rod of correction that shall drive it out. God does not afflict willingly,

ly, nor grieve the children of his love without cause; he visits sins with the rod, and we *procure the stripes to ourselves.*

The fatherly severity of God is intended to humble our pride, imbitter sin, and keep us in reverential awe and filial fear of him. A hiding God, a spiritual fast, and the chastening rod, are terrible things to the Lord's *little ones*; sleeping or waking they can find no rest, till matters are made up, and peace be restored. Some children, when they have had a whipping overnight, will often dream about it, and cry out in their sleep as if they really felt the strokes; and this is sometimes the case with *Little Faith*:—*When I say, my bed shall comfort me, my couch shall ease my complaint, then thou scarest me with dreams, and terrifiest me through visions; so that my soul chooseth strangling, and death rather than life, Job vii. 13, 14, 15.* If he was terrified with dreams, it is plain he dreamt of the rod; had his dreams been heavenly, like those of Jeremiah, they would have left the same sweetness upon his soul—*Upon this I awaked, and beheld, and my sleep was sweet unto me, Jer. xxxi. 26.*

To be short, the strongest man in faith was once a *babe in grace*; those that are weak are to be received, but not to *doubtful disputations*; faith and her evidences, unbelief and her doubts, do inhabit a believer at one and the same time; there is *little faith*, *growing faith*, and the *fullest assurance of faith* mentioned in scripture. Neither

the apostles, prophets, nor even God our Saviour himself, ever refused to suckle the babe, lead and feed the child, strengthen the *weak*, or encourage the *ewe great with young*. No bible pastor ever found the whole family of God in the full assurance of faith; much less did they confine their ministry to those only who are called *fathers in Christ*; lambs stand in more need of the shepherd's aid than grown sheep or old rams, and children are more craving after food than aged fathers, who can feed themselves. If you choose to reply to this, I will, God willing, urge a second plea, and shew thee that I have yet to speak in behalf of *little faith*; meanwhile I would caution thee, as David did Joab, to *deal gently with the young man*, even *Little Faith*.

You may perhaps take it unkind in me to send you this answer from the press; to which I answer, there is no name but my own affixed to it; nor shall there be, unless you bring the matter to light by a public reply.

I was once acquainted with a person in the country who had newly begun to speak in public; he seemed very simple, but in experience, wisdom, and understanding, he was quite a babe; however, he started from his infancy into the fullest assurance of faith all at once, and wrote me a letter similar to this of yours; I saw where he was, and I knew that God had never led him there. I answered it, and sent an exact
copy

copy of it to a few friends who opposed him; he dealt very unfairly with my letter when he read it among them, but the others by my copy perceived it and corrected him.

Some time after this a certain professor at Richmond seemed dotingly fond of me, which my soul was grieved at, as I wish no hypocrite ever to countenance or stand by me. I told many of the friends what I thought of the man, and how they might expect him to turn out, which by some of the simple was not well received; however in process of time, like Pharaoh, God turned his heart to hate me, and deal subtilly with me, which was what I had long expected. He thought I kept the door too close; he wanted to bring into the society those we thought proper to keep out: On this account he addicted himself to the ministry; opened his house, and began to preach; which is no more than Simon Magus, Judas, and other graceless men have done. I received from him a very scurrilous letter, to which I wrote an answer, and sent it to the hands of two good men at Peterham, and desired them to read it, and if they thought proper to seal it and send it; they agreed to send it, but my friend, *Captain Duckett* by name, said he would take a copy of it first; he did so; and in a few days happened to call on some friends, who asked him if he had seen the letter that Mr. HUNTINGTON had sent to Mr. F——, and cried shame of it; the Captain was surprised

surprised at what they said, as well he might, for the gentleman had interlined my letter, till at some places he made me call myself the *I am*, as if I was the *Messiah* himself,—and they were all astonished at my daring presumption. The Captain went from house to house and read his copy of my letter to them, which made the man appear to be what I always said he was; he soon shut up his house and left the place; thus God guards his unwary children, and their reputation too, when they suspect no danger. I had taken no copy of my letter, nor had I desired my friends to do it,—but God put it into the Captain's heart, and soon shewed him there was a cause for it.

I do not think, Sir, that you would serve me so by any means—far from it; but as I believe you are injuring the weaklings of the flock, I have printed this little plea, that LITTLE FAITH may have something to defend himself against your streightened ministry—in which I firmly believe you err, and by which you do offend many of the *little ones* that believe in Jesus, and make the hearts of those sad whom the Lord would not have made sad; and this you will find when you come to be soundly tried: *To the weak*, says Paul, *became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some*, 1 Cor. ix. 22. Go we and do likewise.

We

We are to separate the vile from the precious, and the chaff from the wheat, as the Lord discovers them, to purge out the old leaven, to draw proper lines, to shew the sincere from the hypocritical, and to purge ourselves from disorderly and false professors. But the command to Simon is applicable to every minister of Christ—*Lovest thou me?—feed my lambs—feed my sheep;—the weaklings of the flock are to be fed as well as the sheep.* The passage you refer to—*He that doubteth is damned if he eat*, Rom. xiv. 23. is perverted; the damnation of hell is not intended by that text; for although truth hath declared that meat commendeth us not to God—*for neither if we eat are we the better; neither if we eat not are we the worse*, 1 Cor. viii. 8. *for the kingdom of God is not meat and drink*, Rom. xiv. 17. yet God has not fixed the sentence of damnation upon meat, nor upon him that eats it, any more than he has promised heaven to them that fast in Lent, or live upon fish and eggs. He that commandeth abstinence from meat under the gospel, contradicts the Saviour, who declares, *that which goeth into a man defiles him not.* Forbidding to marry, and *commanding to abstain from meats, are doctrines of devils*, and are enforced by those only who give heed to *seducing spirits*, 1 Tim. iv. 1—3. *I know (says Paul), and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself; but to him that esteemeth any thing unclean, to him it is unclean*, Rom. xiv. 14. Such

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an one goes not by the word of God; he is awed, governed, and kept in bondage by a blind, misled, or uninformed conscience,—having not light to see his liberty.

God damns no man for eating meat; the sentence in the text is from the man himself—*Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth*, Rom. xiv. 22. but man is not Lord of life and death; the sentence of eternal damnation is not lodged in his power; that prerogative belongs to the judge of quick and dead and none else; nor is the sentence of God intended by the word damnation, but the sentence of a man's own conscience which follows upon his commission of that which he believes to be sin. *And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith; for whatsoever is not of faith is sin*, Rom. xiv. 23.

Dear Sir adieu,

While I subscribe myself,

Yours to command in the Gospel of Christ,

W. HUNTINGTON.

Winchester-Row,
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